Motives, narratives, and membership realities
Lessons from 50 years of EU enlargement

SUMMARY
This briefing explores the motives, narratives, and membership realities of the three states that acceded to the European Communities (EC) in its first enlargement, in 1973: the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark. It argues that, despite the different conditions and context at the time, it is possible to draw lessons from this first enlargement experience on how applicant states can create favourable conditions for their stable long-term integration into the present-day European Union.

Governments, political parties and societal groups need to define their expectations of the economic benefits of EU membership realistically. This was the case in Ireland and Denmark, which rightly expected to benefit from the common agricultural policy and – in the case of Ireland – significant fiscal transfers. It was not the case for the UK, however, leading to a negative collective experience of the economic realities of membership during the economic slump following the 1973 oil crisis. Politically, moreover, the UK was ill prepared for cooperative patterns of politics and policy-making in the EC/EU. Large sections of the British elites and citizens saw the world in a binary divide between those ruling and those being ruled. EC membership could easily be portrayed as mediating the UK's transition from a position of ruling to one of being ruled by an allegedly new imperial centre, 'Brussels'. By contrast, EC membership gave the Irish an institutionalised European voice. Sharing formal sovereignty for them enhanced their actual independence from the UK. Denmark, finally, over time developed a pragmatic approach to sharing sovereignty.

This briefing also highlights the importance of defending the aim of EU membership with realistic and convincing narratives. The creation of a broad domestic consensus on the desirability of membership, and preparation for its economic and political implications, are crucial for shaping a trajectory towards stable long-term integration into the EU.

This briefing follows up a roundtable event organised by EPRS on 26 April 2023, which included contributions by N. Piers Ludlow, London School of Economics, Brigid Laffan, European University Institute, and Morten Rasmussen, Copenhagen University.

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Introduction

Accession to the European Union poses many challenges, both for the applicant state and for the EU itself. Alignment with the EU’s legal system and policies requires purposeful preparation through structured cooperation. In the past, it also involved the negotiation and implementation of transition periods. This was the case, for example, for the full integration of Spain and Portugal into the agricultural customs union and the common agricultural policy (CAP) following their accession in 1986. Similarly, it applied to the full participation of the new central and eastern European Member States in free movement of people, following their accession in 2004-2007, with continued temporary restrictions on access to some national labour markets in the EU.

At times, accession can appear like a highly technical process of negotiation and adjustment to the EU legal system and policies. It is also a profoundly political process, however, that raises important questions for the applicant states and the EU. Thus, the EU has repeatedly debated the issue of ‘deepening versus widening’: or whether its enlargement could limit its ability to reform and become more efficient and democratic in its institutional structures and informal practices. Many in the EU questioned, in the early 1990s, for example, whether the accession of neutral countries like Austria and Sweden could inhibit the forging of stronger foreign policy and defence cooperation.

For many applicant countries, the issues raised by the prospect and reality of EU membership involve even starker choices and pitfalls, however. They include, in the first instance, the motives for their application, ranging from the hope of economic growth and welfare gains, to the prospect of greater security against potential or actual foreign threats, or the expectation of EU membership securing a democratic transition or facilitating a more profound economic and societal transformation.

The choices also concern how national political and economic elites communicate the implications of EU membership to citizens. Do they sell the expected membership dividends as automatically incurred or as requiring difficult adjustments in the domestic legal and political system, economy, and society? Do they seek to forge a broad consensus to minimise conflict over membership or further integration following the actual accession? Finally, once inside the EU, how does the applicant country co-shape its own destiny as a Member-State? How do political and economic elites as well as citizens perceive the realities of membership? Do the expected benefits of membership accrue, or does the membership experience also involve disappointments?

Many of these questions already posed themselves for the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark when moving towards the first enlargement of the then European Communities on 1 January 1973. That followed their first set of applications for membership in 1961, which French President Charles de Gaulle had thwarted with his veto against British membership in January 1963. Clearly, the trajectories of all three countries were specific and the temporal context in the Cold War was very different from the 2020s. At the same time, the three cases provide food for reflection for contemporary enlargement challenges.

To facilitate such reflection, each country section in this briefing will discuss three core aspects of the accession process. They are the motivations for the membership application, domestic narratives about accession communicated to citizens (in the case of Ireland and Denmark in accession referendums, and in the case of the United Kingdom again in the 1975 referendum about continued membership) and the experiences of the realities of actual membership. The conclusion then compares the three countries to bring out some broader implications for how applicant countries may be able to maximise the chances of stable long-term integration into the EU.

Let us in, so we can take the lead: United Kingdom

When the six founding Member-States discussed and then negotiated the setting-up of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1955-1957, the British government rejected the option of
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participation. It did so primarily on the grounds that inclusion in a western European customs union was incompatible with the Commonwealth preferential trading system and the United Kingdom's own self-perceived role as a great power, no longer on a par with the United States and the Soviet Union, but stronger than any western Europe country. However, in 1961, the Conservative government headed by Prime Minister Harold Macmillan first applied for membership of the EEC. At the time, the British economic performance compared to the EEC was lagging. The government hoped that membership of the customs union would re-energise British industry and exports. It was also attracted to the political merits of membership at a time when decolonisation was proceeding rapidly, the 'special relationship' with the United States was becoming ever more lopsided, and the Six were discussing political union under the Fouchet Plan. Were 'political union' to succeed, Britain felt it better to be inside, able to ensure that de Gaulle could not lead Europe away from the Atlanticism that the UK supported. Largely for this latter reason, John F. Kennedy's US government was also very supportive of the British membership bid.

When the Labour government under Prime Minister Harold Wilson then applied for membership in 1967, its motives were once again a combination of the economic and the political. This time, moreover, the British felt able to submit a less conditional application than had been the case in 1961. When de Gaulle vetoed the application once more, the British left it on the table. In 1969, de Gaulle's resignation as French President then paved the way for the membership negotiations that finally led to the accession of the UK to the EC, together with Ireland and Denmark, while the Norwegians marginally rejected EC membership in their first membership referendum, in 1972.

When the Conservative government of Prime Minister Edward Heath took the United Kingdom 'into Europe' in the early 1970s, it was again the result of a cocktail of economic and political motivations. During the 1960s, the British economy was still growing, but at a much slower pace than that of all EEC Member States. In 1958 and 1959 respectively, West Germany overtook the United Kingdom in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) and exports. In 1967, the Labour government saw itself forced to devalue Sterling. Moreover, the country faced more and more conflictual industrial relations, which preoccupied the Heath government and contributed to its downfall in 1974. In these circumstances, the Heath government, even more so than his predecessors, hoped that integration into the more dynamic EC customs union would expose British industry to greater competition, enforce its rejuvenation, and facilitate the ongoing reorientation towards greater inter-industry trade amidst relatively declining Commonwealth trade links.

The British government's political motivations also sought to arrest the country's decline. Whereas the United Kingdom's participation in the Conference of Yalta in 1945 had still given it a sense of independent global influence, the 1956 Suez crisis and the 1968 withdrawal from 'east of Suez', as well as Britain's growing economic plight, made it difficult to keep this image intact. From the perspective of successive British governments, going into the EC and exercising global influence through leading it could be a suitable alternative strategy. As the pro-European Labour foreign secretary, George Brown, demanded when talking to his West German counterpart, Willy Brandt, in 1966, 'Willy, let us in, so we can take the lead'.

Figure 1 – Edward Heath at the signing ceremony of the Accession Treaty, 1972.


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From the start, both larger political parties were deeply divided over EC membership. The Empire wing of the Conservative Party clung to the imperial legacy and separate great power status. The growing Left in the Labour Party was strongly attached to the post-war creation of a national welfare state combined with nationalisation policies. It advocated a kind of democratic socialism in one country, which seemed incompatible with European market integration. Both the Tory Right and the Labour Left vehemently argued against what they portrayed as the loss of sovereignty in a supranational organisation like the EC.

Not only were the political elites split over the issue, but so too was the British public more generally including trade unions and farmers. Some also resented how Britain, in their view, had found itself frustrated, annoyed, and even humiliated by the length of time that it took to join the EC. In 1961, British elites and citizens still thought of accession as a two-way street with the Community as well as the United Kingdom having to adapt in the process. De Gaulle's two vetoes and the accession conditions led them to realise that the process was instead difficult and unequal, a hard lesson to learn for a former great power like the United Kingdom. As a result, the domestic narrative about accession focussed on the expected economic benefits and downplayed its potential long-term constitutional and foreign policy implications. Advocates of EC membership often portrayed it as a pragmatic policy choice, not a new departure for a better common future. This defensive justification of the advantages of EC membership helps explain the two-thirds majority for Remain in the 1975 referendum, but it also created a defensive narrative trajectory up to the 2016 Brexit referendum.

Moreover, once the United Kingdom had joined, none of its expectations materialised immediately. To begin with, the 1973 oil crisis ended three decades of post-war economic growth often referred to as the *trente glorieuses* of western Europe's post-war economic development. The world entered a recession. Economic problems of growing budget and state deficits and rising unemployment were pervasive, and in Britain could all too easily be blamed on 'Europe' irrespective of whether they were actually caused by EC membership. Making matters worse, the budgetary rules of the early EC ensured that Britain, although one of the poorer Member States, became the second-largest net contributor after West Germany. In other words, unlike for the founding Member-States, EC membership was not initially associated in Britain with economic success.

Similarly, British governments were also unable consistently to exercise significant political leadership in the Community. By 1973, the prevailing and well-established EC patterns of politics and policymaking included close Franco-German bilateral cooperation and a strong role for actors from smaller countries like Belgium and Luxembourg as mediators. British governments by contrast seemed to be 'semi-detached', partly reflecting ongoing domestic political debate about whether EC membership was beneficial or not. In 1979, the Labour government opted out of the European Monetary System, and once Labour lost power that same year, the party drifted into outright euroscepticism, fighting (and losing) the 1983 general election on a platform of immediate withdrawal. Under Neil Kinnock in the 1980s they gradually changed their position, becoming much more enthusiastic. But the Conservative Party, after a brief period of strong engagement with the EC that helped shape the single market programme and the Maastricht Treaty, started to move in the opposite direction and had become strongly hostile to greater integration by the late 1990s. Successive British governments moreover had locked the country into a pattern of 'opt outs' that meant that the UK did not participate fully in several key EC/EU policies, including the single currency. This continuing loose affiliation made it easier for eurosceptics to advocate leaving the EU. But as was demonstrated by both the narrow result of the 2016 Brexit referendum and the outcome's hugely polarising effects on British domestic politics, 46 years of membership had greatly shaped the United Kingdom (just as the UK had in its turn shaped the EC/EU). Many Britons only really woke up to quite how far this process had gone, once they had voted to bring EU membership to an end.
Bolstering independence: Ireland

Having only gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1921 at the price of its partition, Ireland’s experience of EC accession was very different indeed. To begin with, the Irish economy was heavily agricultural in the 1960s, with 80% of its agricultural exports still going to the UK. More generally, it was the first poor country to join the EC, its GDP amounting to 64% of the EC average in 1973. Irish trade policy was predicated on protectionism in trade in industrial goods to shield infant industries, and dependant on the UK’s tariff-free import of agricultural products as one of two large western European food importing countries alongside West Germany. However, from 1959 onwards, the Taoiseach, or Prime Minister, Seán Lemass, a co-founder of the Fianna Fáil party with his predecessor Eamon de Valera, was keen to transform the Irish economy through its 1960 General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) accession and EC membership alongside the United Kingdom, constantly using the refrain ‘prepare, prepare, prepare’.5

Lemass also saw eventual EC membership as a transformative project not just for the Irish economy, but also for strengthening its political independence from the former colonial power, the UK. EC membership promised to reduce Irish economic dependence on Britain by diversifying its export markets, as well as holding the prospect of EC support for the development of its industrial and service sectors. EC membership would also give Ireland an independent role and voice in a supranational organisation. For Ireland, therefore, EC membership held the beguiling prospect that it would deliver freedom and enhanced sovereignty. EC membership marked the transition from continuing dependence on the UK to much greater inter-dependence in the EC. For many Irish, therefore, the notion of sharing formal sovereignty to increase one’s de facto sovereignty made perfect sense.

In the 1960s and early 1970s, moreover, subsequent Irish governments made it crystal-clear that they would not stand in the way of greater foreign policy cooperation in the EC. They explained that Ireland remained outside of NATO only down to their refusal to recognise Irish partition and the border between the North and the South.

When Ireland joined the EC in 1973, its domestic politics experienced only limited contestation. In the parliament, only the small Labour Party opposed EC membership. Alongside the expected economic and political benefits of membership, the pro-integration narrative was reminiscent of the later ‘return to Europe’ trope in central and eastern Europe after 1989-1990. After all, Ireland had always been a part of (Catholic) Europe, Irish monks had played a key role in spreading Christianity in Europe, and many Irish had fought in the armies of France, the Habsburg Empire or the Papal States. Crucially, therefore, the accession narrative assumed that Irish and European identity were reconcilable and even mutually reinforcing.

In the end, an overwhelming majority of 83 per cent voted for accession in the 1972 referendum. When the Labour Party subsequently joined the government as a junior partner, it accepted the will of the Irish people. Henceforth, EC membership as such was uncontested. The vast majority of the Irish were not maximalist federalist supporters of European integration. However, they shared a sense of joining something that would bring about positive change, and they were open to this change.
The Irish adjustment to EC membership proved to be extraordinarily easy for its political and administrative system. By the time of the 1975 British EC membership referendum, the Irish consensus was that the country would not leave if the British were to decide to do so.

The Irish economic transition to membership initially proved to be more difficult than the political and administrative adaptation. The 1970s were a tough period for entering the EC and for western Europe's economy more generally. It took Irish businesses some time to understand what it meant to be part of an integrated dynamic market. Then, in the 1980s and 1990s, the Irish economy experienced strong growth, and the country became known as the 'Celtic tiger'. It transformed from the poorest into one of the richest EC/EU Member-States, a process aided by EC fiscal transfers as well as its advantages as an English-speaking country that for some time was able to attract in the region of 25 per cent of US foreign direct investment into western Europe.

Moreover, it turned out that EC/EU membership also eased British-Irish relations in a way that was fundamentally important to Ireland. Both countries became part of an integrated market without border controls, and Irish and British ministers met regularly in EC institutions as well as bilaterally. This supranational and multilateral European context greatly facilitated the search for a solution to the Northern Ireland conflict in a way that no one could have anticipated in 1973, at the height of the 'Troubles'. The British Queen's visit to Ireland in 2011 then marked the symbolic high point of this process of reconciliation and rapprochement.

Nonetheless, the country's rapid economic growth and societal transformation also led to a state of hubris by the end of the 1990s, where some in Ireland began to think that the EU was no longer essential to their welfare, and that they had a choice between Berlin and Boston. However, the Irish then experienced the banking crisis as an abject national (not European) failure. This failure and the strenuous, and successful, efforts to escape as fast as possible from the supervision of the Troika, helped reverse the temporarily more critical attitudes to EU membership and further integration. These attitudes had influenced the initial negative referendum votes on the Nice and Lisbon Treaties - experiences that demonstrated the need for continued commitment and campaigning even in a country like Ireland with a very positive overall experience of EC membership.

Since then, Ireland has continued to make the most from EC/EU membership. Not only has the Irish economy survived Brexit, it has even benefitted from trade diversion. At the same time, Brexit's medium- and long-term impact on Northern Ireland remains unclear. There are still some neuralgic points in Ireland's role in the EU, too, in particular corporate taxation and its non-membership of NATO, especially following Finland's accession and Sweden's still pending application. Still, Ireland has demonstrated and experienced how a poor small country can flourish in the EC/EU to the point where currently, 83 per cent of the Irish believe that the EU has a good future.

Only the CAP, stupid? Denmark

Danish motivations for launching their EC membership applications together with the United Kingdom were different again. To begin with, some domestic actors feared the consequences of continued abstention from the EC. The main worry was about the prospect of a CAP that might seriously discriminate against Danish agricultural exports. This was one of the reasons for the opposition Conservatives and Venstre, which was close to the farming community, to advocate EC membership early on. If the United Kingdom joined the EC, all the most important export markets for Danish agriculture would be protected by the CAP, making Danish accession necessary. However, EC accession together with the United Kingdom would ideally protect Danish agricultural exports, and promised significant benefits from the CAP as negotiated by the EEC Member-States in the 1960s.

At the same, the Social Democrats and the left-liberal Radical Venstre parties were unenthusiastic about EC membership, and remained split at the time of accession and until the late 1980s. They were more strongly attached to the Nordic identity and welfare model. For this reason, they
preferred Nordic cooperation, and opted for the European Free Trade Association that Denmark had set up with the United Kingdom and five other states in 1959-1960, following de Gaulle’s 1958 rejection of the original proposal for a larger western European free trade area including the EEC. As a result, when the Social Democratic-led government from October 1971 onwards negotiated Danish EC accession together with the United Kingdom, they were keen to agree opt-outs. They did so to demonstrate to domestic sceptics, especially on the left of Danish politics, that EC Member States retained a national veto right as per the informal 1966 Luxembourg Compromise, especially concerning monetary integration, which seemed to be on the cards following the 1970 Werner Report. More generally, most Danes shared a pronounced small state nationalism and were keen to protect national sovereignty. At the time, very few in Danish politics and society supported the notion of shared sovereignty, let alone a federal evolution of the EC.

The negative motivation for EC membership dominated the debate and influenced the accession narratives: remaining outside when the United Kingdom was about to join was not an option as Danish agricultural interests had to be protected. In the run-up to the 1972 referendum, the Social Democrat government remained split. The same was true, as in the United Kingdom, for the trade unions that were closely allied with the Social Democrats. All of this made it difficult to develop and embed into Danish politics a cross-party consensus on the nature of and narrative about EC accession with the Conservatives and Venstre. Only when Danish business groups provided funding for a more substantial and cohesive pro-membership campaign and, through informal cooperation with the Social Democratic leadership, targeted the social democrat voters, did the 'Yes' coalition start to convince more voters on the centre-left to support EC accession.

At the same time, the ‘People’s Movement Against Danish EC Membership’, which emerged in 1971 to oppose EC accession, was a consortium of diverse groups and lacked funding for its campaign. This movement, which continued after accession and initially drew a sizeable vote in the first direct European elections in Denmark, advanced a bouquet of diverse arguments. They included, among others, that EC membership would endanger Nordic cooperation, undermine the Danish welfare state, and roll back women’s rights, and that Danes could conceivably be forced to fight in a European army; or that, more generally, Danish sovereignty would be surrendered to ‘Brussels’.

In the end, of the 90 per cent of Danes who voted in the referendum, 63.3 per cent supported EC accession. Crucially, however, they did so mostly on grounds of avoiding disadvantages of staying outside and securing pragmatic economic advantages connected to joining, especially for Danish agriculture. Danish EC accession was politically conditional. Around 50 per cent of all Danes, including many who voted for membership, declared themselves actively opposed to the prospect of a future united Europe.
As in the case of Ireland, once Denmark was inside the EC, the key expected economic benefits actually did accrue. This concerned in particular, the advantages of CAP participation for Danish agriculture. The construction of the EC budget also meant that Denmark, despite being a wealthy Member-State, remained a net beneficiary for many years. Danish industry also profited greatly from integration in the customs union and later, the single market. Moreover, the necessary reform of the Danish welfare state in the 1980s marginalised one of the key arguments from 1972 against joining the EC. Denmark progressively established itself as a key player in what could be termed the group of economically liberal EC/EU Member-States.

Unlike in the case of Ireland, however, Danes remained far more sceptical about the idea of shared sovereignty. Political conflict over further integration continued to characterise domestic Danish politics over Europe, even after the Social Democrats and Radical Venstre developed a more pro-integration agenda after the referendum on the Single European Act, which both parties had opposed. Following the narrow defeat of the Maastricht Treaty in the first 1992 referendum, the political and business elites in Denmark forged a broad consensus on the benefits of EC/EU membership as well as the desirability of participation in further integration. If necessary, opt-outs had to guarantee sufficient domestic support, as in the case of those negotiated before the second successful referendum on the Maastricht Treaty. Indeed, the referendum on membership of the single currency in 2000 demonstrated once more that a majority of Danes were happy with what could be termed ‘opt-out membership’.

Since then, however, it has become much clearer to Danes once more, how precarious national ‘sovereignty’ can be - something that despite its long tradition of independent statehood, Denmark has experienced several times in its history, in particular in the 1864 Prussian/Austrian-Danish war and again during the Nazi German occupation of Denmark in the Second World War. The UK’s 2016 referendum and the highly visible and widely reported negative impacts of the negotiated ‘hard’ Brexit have reinforced the perception that being inside the EU brings multiple economic and political benefits, with support for the EU in Denmark currently in the high 70s (per cent). Moreover, the Russian war on Ukraine has brutally revealed the need for collective defence and security in Europe. It quickly led to the Danish decision in a 2022 referendum to opt fully into the European foreign and defence policy, thus doing away with one of four opt-outs from the Maastricht Treaty.

Conclusion

Its attractiveness as an economic and political union, originally limited to western Europe, but now with pan-European scope, has posed multiple enlargement challenges for the EC/EU. At the same time, it has also asked difficult questions of the applicant countries: about their motives for applying and joining the EC/EU, their accession narratives in domestic politics, and their coping strategies for the actual conditions and experience of membership. Although each enlargement had its own particularities in time-specific contexts, analysing the first 1973 EC enlargement after 50 years can help us draw some lessons, including for future enlargements.

On the part of the EC/EU, one such lesson could be that long delays and transition periods in and by themselves can burden the experience of accession and membership as in the case of the United Kingdom, which twice applied for membership, in 1961 and 1967, only to have those applications vetoed by de Gaulle. This briefing has focussed on the accession countries, however. Regarding all three categories analysed here - their motives, narratives, and membership experience - the three countries – the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark – differed enormously. The great variation allows for cross-country comparison, however, and drawing some general conclusions about the best conditions for defining realistic motives for applying for EU membership and suitable narratives to generate a broad elite consensus and long-term popular support for EU integration.

To start with, governments, political parties and societal groups need to define their expectations of economic benefits of EC/EU membership clearly and realistically. The British had diffuse hopes that EC membership could miraculously reinvigorate their industry and exports and arrest the
country’s relative economic decline. These hopes were not only shattered when EC accession coincided with western European economic woes following the 1973 oil crisis; they also ignored the fact that the country’s economic problems were largely of a structural nature and could only be tackled through domestic reforms. At best, EC membership could have facilitated such reforms, which British governments largely avoided, however, until Margaret Thatcher imposed her rigidly neo-liberal agenda after 1979.

In contrast, the economic motives of Ireland and Denmark were both more concrete and realistic. Ireland was able to diversify its agricultural exports through the EC customs union and CAP. As a poor country, it was also bound to profit from the EC’s structural and (later) regional policies. Lastly, it used EC membership to foster its economic liberalisation in a controlled manner. Denmark focussed especially on securing the predictable benefits of the CAP for its farmers. At the same time, Ireland sought to create attractive conditions for foreign direct investment in the country, and Denmark revamped its welfare state, both without blaming ‘Brussels’ for problems in the process. By contrast, long before the eurosceptic right advocated Brexit, Thatcher was already agitating against EC over-regulation and demanded ‘my money back’ during the years 1979 to 1984. While she perhaps had good arguments about the unfair structure of the EC budget and its uneven impact on Member-States, but this strong narrative negativity came to be pervasive in British elite discourses about ‘Europe’.

Politically, moreover, the United Kingdom with its recent experience of Empire and decolonisation was ill prepared for cooperative patterns of politics and policy-making in the EC/EU including with former colonial territories like Ireland or, much later, Malta and Cyprus. As Fintan O’Toole has argued in his perceptive study of Brexit,10 British elites and by extension, citizens, saw the world in a binary divide between those ruling and those being ruled. Political elites did not always back up their pretentions of leadership with political commitment and economic resources, so that eurosceptics could later portray EC/EU membership as a transition from ruling to being ruled, by Europe’s alleged new imperial centre, Brussels. By contrast, the Irish saw EC/EU membership as giving them an institutionalised European voice and bolstering their relatively recent independence. Despite the prevailing strong attachment to national sovereignty, finally, Denmark as a small state clearly had no delusions of grandeur and over time has embraced a more pragmatic approach to sharing sovereignty.

This briefing has also underlined how important it is for political elites in applicant states to graft realistic and convincing narratives about the reasons for and benefits of EC/EU membership, to create both strong cross-party consensus and lasting public support for membership and further integration. The political divisions in the United Kingdom were extreme from the first 1961 application onwards, within both larger parties and across them. Moreover, both parties actively fuelled such division when they were somewhat less disunited than the other, first the Conservatives and later Labour. In contrast, the Labour Party in Ireland drew a lesson from the 1972 referendum and henceforth supported membership. In Denmark, the growing pro-integration attitudes and policies of both the Social Democrats and Radical Venstre facilitated the emergence of a greater centre-right to centre-left consensus, which in turn made positive outcomes in the successful second referendum on the Maastricht Treaty and the 2022 referendum on opting in to the common foreign and defence policy more likely. In other words, managing EC/EU accession is, in the first instance, a challenge for domestic elites and citizens in national politics. The EU can facilitate Europeanisation, but elites and citizens need to push a consistent domestic political agenda for this to be successful in the longer run.
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ENDNOTES

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